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### Hot Topics in Firearm Legislature

Gun control is an issue that comes and goes from the media's forefront, seemingly flagged by tragedy with each event appearing to be worse than the last. This deadly pattern implies it is time to stop the reactive approach to preventing gun violence and focus on proactive measures. The first solution that comes to the minds of many American's is the movement to place stricter regulations on the guns themselves. Supreme Court cases have helped to tailor the boundaries over the years, such as *Presser v. Illinois*, (1886) and *DC v. Heller*, (2008), while implications of proposed legislation and ideas from the gun control platform test those standards today. These laws include registrations, carrying permits and even outright bans. A better understanding of these legal implications can be found by looking at what federal and primary state gun laws are already in effect and what legislation is being proposed by the gun control platform. This research will look at the right to self-defense as well as federal background checks. It analyzes the role of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), when it comes to automatic rifles and other items under their jurisdiction. Also presented is information on both restrictive and pro-gun laws at the state level.

In order to achieve this broader understanding of legislation implications it is important to include the history of gun laws. The freedoms Americans are awarded through the Second Amendment have always been restricted through gun legislation. Gun laws are as old as the country, and probably so too is the debate. Things get tricky when trying to study statistics across the nation on a state by state level because of a patchwork of laws and demographics combined. The lack of ability to pinpoint one specific cause or cure is what frustrates so many citizens. The nation's makeup of such a diverse population contributes to the argument as proponents from

each side come to debate using their own experiences and beliefs. That is why looking at legislation on the state, federal and constitutional level is so crucial. With the mainstream media as much of the public's only information source, it is crucial to have a grasp on what these gun legislation issues mean for law abiding citizens as well as the criminals who keep the seemingly endless tragic stories in the news today.

Written into the foundation of our country and woven into the fabric of our history is the right to bear arms. Some argue that this freedom has been stretched too far and has allowed, and even promoted, America's high rate of gun violence. This research looks to put the legal side of the long argued gun debate into perspective in order to predict where the law could go in the future. Studying these firearm "hot topics" make it clear that alternate solutions will have to be developed outside of the scope of gun legislation in order to put a stop to the high rates of gun violence in America.